

Aussie PM-elect picks his new Cabinet

by UPI

CANBERRA, Australia -- Australian Prime Minister-elect Kevin Rudd has named a 20-person Cabinet lineup from his victorious Labor Party, which assumes office next week. Rudd told a news conference Thursday that Julia Gillard, named as Australia's first deputy prime minister, will also be in charge of a new "super ministry" incorporating employment, workplace relations and education. Rudd, whose party ousted the Liberal-National coalition headed by Prime Minister John Howard, at elections last Saturday, appointed two other women to key Cabinet posts. Nicola Roxon will head the Ministry of Health and Aging. Penny Wong assumes responsibility for climate change and water policies which has been split off from the environment portfolio, retained by former rock star Peter Garrett, who sang for Midnight Oil. Rudd has said ratifying the Kyoto Treaty on reducing greenhouse gases will be a top priority of the new government. One of the biggest changes was the appointment of Stephen Smith as the new foreign minister -- instead of Robert McClelland who acted as "shadow" foreign minister for the past five years. McClelland, a former lawyer, will be the new Australian attorney general.

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